Can we know when to trust our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge? Consider history and one other area of knowledge.

1. Intro:
   1. Emotion as a way of knowing
   2. Pursuit of Knowledge 🡪 Gaining insight and into something
2. When DO we trust emotions? Can we ever NOT trust them?
   1. Instincts – things we do automatically without thinking about 🡪 they feel right/normal 🡪 Taking care of a baby. Every normal person would pick up a baby if they found it in the woods somewhere, crying and obviously abandoned.
   2. Intuition 🡪 my Mom running over a little boy and stopping 🡪 emotional reaction; not reason or language or sense perception
   3. When do we not/ should we not trust emotions? 🡪 when we have time to think about it – in situations where reason, sense perception or language conflicts with emotion
      1. Eg. When you feel that someone is having difficulties by the way they act, yet appear to manage things perfectly well (they have good grades, their friendships appear to be intact, etc.)
      2. Eg. When you’re afraid of a test, even though your reasoning tells you that you studied everything on the syllabus.
3. Trusting Emotions based on History
   1. From past experiences, we can learn to see patterns of when our emotions were correct (ie. it was confirmed later on through other WOK)
   2. Example: my Dad is much better at judging a situation (and what is going on behind the scenes) than I am, because he has more experience and can trust his emotions that point him in a certain direction.
   3. Example: Propaganda in History
      1. Mao Zedong and Hitler used propaganda to emotionally bias people
         1. Situation where one should not have trusted emotions, but many people did
         2. On the other hand, it was useful to Mao/Hitler 🡪 from their perspective, people where right to trust their emotions 🡪 Who judges when we should or shouldn’t trust our emotions
         3. We can now learn from evidence of the past and recognize propaganda nowadays. 🡪 However, this is limited to the amount of information delivered to us and to the amount of effort we put into studying the past. 🡪 Limited by what historian considers significant and decides to write down. 🡪 because it happened a long time ago, we can’t know if we are misunderstanding what has been written down (ie. we could be totally misinterpreting things without ever knowing)
4. Trusting emotions in Ethics
   1. Emotions is a key factor influencing our ethical decisions.
      1. 🡪 emotion is what we often use to judge our actions (we FEEL bad about smt or we FEEL we should do...)
      2. Those emotions are not usually random: we feel bad based on experiences where we either saw bad effects of something or because we were told by others that it would yield bad results
      3. Is there such a thing as intuitive knowledge of right and wrong? Universal values?
   2. If feelings about a situation differ, how do we know which one is right / more trustworthy? Moral Relativism.
      1. Eg. Beregond in LOTR: He went against his master’s orders to save Faramir’s life. However, other servants felt it was right to follow their master’s orders. 🡪 led to conflict between the two parties and a few people died in the conflict. Guards justified: consistency (Kant’s theory); Beregond justified: if he hadn’t acted, Faramir would have died. 🡪 who’s right? In this case, their disagreement was more harmful than if one had just given in to the other side...
      2. When do we need to stick to our moral values? When do we need to compromise? What are our emotions in certain situations based on?
      3. If no one compromised, the world would be extremely chaotic. If everyone compromised, there wouldn’t be any moral values.
      4. In order to be able to judge this better, it is good if we can identify the reasons for certain emotional reactions
         1. Eg. For a long time I hated planes because I connected them with having to say goodbye. 🡪 If I identify this as an acceptable reason to hate planes, then I will go on. If I decide it’s silly, I will stop trusting emotions concerning planes and after a while, hopefully, those feelings will disappear.
         2. The same thing applies for ethical decisions.
5. Conclusion
   1. Emotions are and will always remain unreliable.
   2. However, many emotions have a cause and can often be right. We should certainly consider them and realize they are there, even if we decide not to heed them.
   3. It is possible, especially with more experience, to be able to have a good idea whether or not an emotion is trustworthy. It is possible to identify some emotions as NOT being trustworthy.
   4. We can never fully know how trustworthy emotions are as the knowledge we gain from them often has no way of being proven wrong/ we never get the opportunity to find out whether our knowledge is correct. We just assume it is when things match our expectations (but we may overlook things or misinterpret them).